

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-05 LAB-04 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 /050 W

----- 050644

R 021337Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1146

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5270

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PO

SUBJ: LABOR: VISIT OF LEONARD WOODCOCK AND HERMAN REBHAN
TO PORTUGAL

SUMMARY: THE INTERNATIONAL METAL WORKERS FEDERATION AND THE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE SENDING
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO PORTUGAL IN A SORELY NEEDED EFFORT
TO BOLSTER NON-COMMUNIST LABOR UNIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. LEONARD WOODCOCK, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS,
AND HERMAN REBHAN, PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL METAL WORKERS
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FEDERATION, (IMF) VISITED PORTUGAL NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 1 AT
THE INVITATION OF MARIO SOARES ON BEHALF OF PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST

PARTY. THE FOLLOWING SUMMMARIZES THEIR VIEWS AS STATED TO LABOR ATTACHE SHORTLY BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE:

A. THEY STATE THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE CONTROL OF INTER-SINDICAL AND COMPOSE ALL OF THE DIRECTORATE OF THE LISBON METAL WORKERS FEDERATION (SINDICATO NACIONAL DOS TECHNICOS E OPERARIOS METALURGICOS E METALO-MECANICOS DO DISTRICTO DE LISBOA) EXCEPT FOR THE PRESIDENT, WHO IS A SOCIALIST. HOWEVER, THEY BELIEVE THE DEGREE OF COMMUNIST CONTROL IS DIS-PROPORTIONATE TO THEIR REAL STRENGTH AMONG THE WORKERS.

B. BASED ON THEIR CONTACTS WITH SOCIALIST PARTY LABOR LEADERS FRACISCO MARCELO CURTO AND OTHER YOUNG ACTIVISTS, THEY BELIEVE THERE EXISTS AN AMPLE FRAMEWORK FOR LEGITIMATE, NON-POLITICAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING. IN VIEW OF THE SOCIALISTS' PRESENT LACK OF ORGANIZATION, SUCH EFFORTS MUST BEGIN AT BASIC LEVELS BOTH IN CONTENT AND TARGET AUDIENCES. THEY WERE WELL RECEIVED DURING PLANT VISITS TO UNIONS AT LISBON'S MAJOR SHIPYARD (LISNAVE), GENERAL MOTORS, FORD, AND TIMEX AND FOUND A REAL DESIRE BY LOCAL UNION LEADERS FOR ADVICE AND TRAINING.

C. THE IMF IS SENDING A SPANIARD, CARLOS PARDO, TO PORTUGAL AS A RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE FOR AN INITIAL 6 MONTH PERIOD TO ASSIST WITH TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION AND WILL ALSO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE ICFTU SPONSORED CENTER FOR SINDICAL STUDIES. THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, WHICH CONCURRENTLY HAS A VISITING DELEGATION IN PORTUGAL, WILL LIKEWISE SEND A RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, A SPANISH-SPEAKING SWEDE.

D. BASED ON THEIR MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF LABOR, AN INTERVIEW HELD JOINTLY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DELEGATION, THEY REGARD MINISTER COSTA MARTINS AS "AN INNOCENT" WHO IS LARGELY STAGE-MANAGED BY COMMUNISTS IN THE MINISTRY. THE MINISTER GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT AS THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO STRIKES HE HAS NO LABOR PROBLEMS.

2. COMMENT: THERE IS A STRIKING CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TREATMENT RECEIVED BY WOODCOCK, REBHAN, AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DELEGATION, IN COMPARISON WITH THAT GIVEN TO A RECENT THREE MAN SOVIET DELEGATION, HEADED BY VLADMIR BOGATIKOV, SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF SOVIET TRADE

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UNIONS. THE RUSSIANS WERE FETED BY INTERSINDICAL, RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE, AND MET WITH PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AS WELL AS WITH THE MINISTER OF LABOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS. THE WOODCOCK/REBHAN VISIT HAS RECEIVED SOLELY LOW-KEY TREATMENT IN LISBON'S DIARIO DE NOTICIAS. NO REPORTERS SHOWED UP FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH WAS SCHEDULED ON NOVEMBER 30, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF PRESS HOLIDAY ON DECEMBER 1. SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR RELATIONS, VISITS, COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON05270
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740349-0291
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741268/aaaacggs.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <14-Aug-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR: VISIT OF LEONARD WOODCOCK AND HERMAN REBHAN TO PORTUGAL
TAGS: ELAB, OTRA, PO, UNITED AUTO WORKERS, INT METAL WORKERS FEDERATION, INT FED OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, (WOODCOCK, LEONARD), (REBHAN, HERMAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005